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BOOK REVIEW

Beetles from the early Russian explorations of the West Coast of North America 1815-1857, ed. by E. Gorton Linsley. 1978. Reprint edition, by Arno Press Inc., Three Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Hardbound, ca. 540 p., $40.00.

When a 5-cent cup of coffee costs 35 cents, a 15-cent beer costs 75 cents, and a 3-cent letter costs 15 cents, it is neither surprising nor particularly obscene that a 10-dollar book costs 40 dollars. The question we must ask is, "Is this indeed a 10-dollar book?" There obviously is a market for reprint editions of important but scarce publications; are we the market?

This reprint edition includes a brief note by Keir B. Sterling about the collectors and students of materials secured in Imperial Russian enclaves in western North America in the early 1800's, plus 8 *alpha*-taxonomy articles about beetles published between 1840 and 1860: Mannerheim (6), Ménétriés (1), Motschulsky (1)—a bit over 500 pages reprinted from mostly Russian journals, variously in French, Latin, or German. This is neither more nor less than a bound collection of reprints, neither freshly edited nor consecutively paginated.

In the sense of cost of preparation, quality of reproduction, news to science, and the like, this definitely is not a 10-dollar book. But, that it is not coffee-table quality is very much beside the point.

I judge that this certainly is a 10-dollar book—one that will find a comfortable niche on my shelf and be consulted from time to time—for these reasons: The selection of material is such that access is enhanced; the papers are an important historical resource for beetle taxonomists; and the original papers are not otherwise readily available to most workers. However, I can see no use for it to other than practicing taxonomists.

You will ask me if *I* would pay 40 dollars. Well . . . that's a lot of 75-cent beers . . .

—D.R.W.